

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 - 18 are pending in this application.

Claims 1, 2, 7, and 8 have been amended. New claims 9 and 10 each ultimately depending from claim 1 have been added. New claim 11 depending from claim 2 and new claims 12 and 13 each ultimately depending from claim 8 have been added. A new independent claim 14 and new claims 15 - 18 depending therefrom have been added.

In the Office Action, claims 1 – 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Also, in the Office Action, claims 1 – 3, 5, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 3,407,106 to Barefoot or US Patent No. 2,346,439 to Leguillon. Additionally, in the Office Action, claims 4, 6, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 3,407,106 to Barefoot or US Patent No. 2,346,439 to Leguillon.

With respect to the rejection of claims 1 – 8 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, Applicant has amended claims 1, 2, 7, and 8 to delete the objectionable terms. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1 – 8 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of claims 1 - 8 under 35 U.S.C 102(b) and 35 U.S.C 103(a) in view of the following comments. Claim 1 of the present application as currently amended recites a tire building machine having a carcass support on which a carcass is rotatably mounted and a tread strip feed device via which

a tread strip is fed onto the carcass. The tread strip feed device includes a linear path support assembly on which a tread strip can be supported in a substantially linear disposition and the path support assembly extends from an end of the tread strip feed device to another end more closely adjacent the carcass. Furthermore, the tread strip feed device of the tire building machine recited in claim 1 as currently amended is raisable to a feed position at which the tread strip extends tangentially relative to the carcass for feeding the tread strip thereonto in a tire building process during which the carcass rotates about a carcass rotation axis cyclically through a lower hemisphere travel extent below a horizontal plane passing through the carcass rotation axis and an upper hemisphere travel extent above the horizontal plane. The tread strip feed device supports the tread strip at the feed position such that the tread strip extends tangentially relative to the upper hemisphere travel extent of the carcass during the feeding of the tread strip onto the carcass.

The tire building machine recited in claim 1 of the present application as currently amended advantageously permits the tire builder to prepare and make ready (via, i.e., cutting to length) the next-to-be fed tread strip while this tread strip is supported at a lower, more favorable ergonomic position. Thereafter, the tread strip feed device recited in claim 1 is operable to support the tread strip at the feed position such that the tread strip extends tangentially relative to the upper hemisphere travel extent of the carcass during the feeding of the tread strip onto the carcass. The feed of the tread strip onto the carcass at the location of the upper hemisphere travel extent of the

carcass beneficially prevents undesired elongation of the tread strip during its feed onto the carcass.

Barefoot '106 discloses a basic tread stock handling and applying apparatus operable to move tread stock along a conveyor 25, through a severing station 22 at which the tread stock is cut to length, and thereafter to an applying station 24 at which the severed tread strip is wound around a tire casing.

Leguillon '439 discloses a transfer table 16 supported by swing frames 17, 18 which make possible a swinging movement of the transfer table 16 to position the transfer table 16 relative to a collapsible tire building drum 12.

Applicant submits that neither Barefoot '106 nor Leguillon '439 teach or disclose the tire building machine recited in claim 1 as currently amended. For example, Barefoot '106 does not teach or disclose a tread strip feed device that supports a tread strip extending tangentially relative to the upper hemisphere travel extent of the carcass during the feeding of the tread strip onto the carcass. Instead, Barefoot '106 discloses that its applying station 24 applies the tread strip onto the lower hemisphere travel extent of the tire casing and this manner of applying a tread strip can disadvantageously create elongation of the tread strip length due to the tension forces exerted on the tread strip as it is pulled onto the underside of the tire casing.

Leguillon '439 likewise fails to teach or disclose the inventive tire building machine. For example, the transfer table 16 of Leguillon '439 is not swung to from its tread strip feed position to a lower position; instead, the transfer table 16 is swung to a

position at least as high as its tread strip feed position (see, for example, the phantom line position of the transfer table 16 in Figure 1 of Leguillon '439). Consequently, the Leguillon '439 arrangement does not provide the desirable ergonomic benefits of the lower position of the tread strip feed device recited in claim 1 of the present application.

Thus, it is submitted that the tire building machine recited in claim 1 of the present application is neither taught nor disclosed in Barefoot '106 or Leguillon '439, whereupon it is submitted that the rejection of claims 1 - 8 as unpatentable over Barefoot '106 or Leguillon '439 should be withdrawn.

Applicant submits, as well, that new independent claim 14 patentably defines over the prior art of record. Claim 14 recites a tire building machine having a carcass support on which a carcass is rotatably mounted and a tread strip feed device via which a tread strip is fed onto the carcass. The tread strip feed device includes a linear path support assembly and a swing movement assembly, with the linear path support assembly for supporting thereon a tread strip in a substantially linear disposition and the linear path support assembly extending from a remote end thereof remote from the carcass to a proximate end thereof more closely adjacent the carcass. The swing movement assembly selectively raises and lowers the tread strip feed device between a feed position and a non-feed position, whereupon, when the swing movement assembly has raised the tread strip feed device into the feed position, the linear path support assembly supports the tread strip at a tangential orientation relative to the carcass for the subsequent feeding of the tread strip onto the carcass in a tire building process and,

when the swing movement assembly has lowered the tread strip feed device into the non-feed position, the linear path support assembly supports a next-to-be fed tread strip at a height smaller than the height at which the next-to-be fed tread strip is supported when the swing movement assembly subsequently raises the tread strip feed device from its non-feed position to its feed position. Moreover, as recited in new independent claim 14, the linear path support assembly is movable relative to the balance of the tread strip feed device in a translatory movement to thereby move the proximate end of the linear path support assembly toward the carcass, whereupon the positioning of a tread strip at the tangential orientation relative to the carcass for the subsequent feeding of the tread strip onto the carcass is effected by a combination of the translatory movement of the proximate end of the linear path support assembly toward the carcass and the movement of the tread strip feed device from its non-feed position into its feed position by the swing movement assembly.

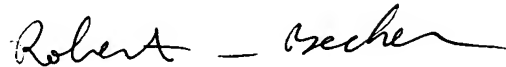
None of the prior art of record, Applicant submits, teaches or discloses the tire building machine recited in new independent claim 14. For example, neither Barefoot '106 nor Leguillon '439 teach or disclose a tire building machine that provides a combined translatory movement of a linear path support assembly toward the carcass and a swing movement of the tread strip feed device from its non-feed position into its feed position.

Applicant submits that claims 1 - 18 are now in condition for allowance and early action toward that end is respectfully requested. However, should the Examiner have

App. No 10/066,282
Amdt. Dated February 2, 2004
Reply to Office Action of November 5, 2003

any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call from him in order to resolve any outstanding issues and expedite placement of the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Becker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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